



The topic of Hemingray and carnival glass is one that keeps coming up. I did a quick overview on it in the Summer 2014 Drip Points Magazine, but thought it would be good to revisit the topic with a bit more detail. This article was inspired by a discussion on Facebook about “Is this a real carnival”

Carnival glass (general history)

Carnival glass is made by spraying metallic oxide on warm glass after being removed from the molds and is still warm.

Carnival glass originated as a glass called iridill, produced beginning in 1908 by the Fenton Art Glass Company.

The name Carnival glass comes from the fact that it was actually given out at carnivals.

Most U.S. carnival glass was made before 1925, with production in clear decline after 1931. Some significant production continued outside the US through the depression years of the early 1930s, tapering off to very little by the 1940s.

Hemingray carnival glass.

Hemingray made both insulators and bottles in carnival glass. Hemingray produced all their carnival between 1932 and 1936. For their insulator production they made insulators in carnival glass because it is slightly conductive; this would reduce radio interference created from AC power lines. Carnival was also used because of its low leakage by making the insulator slightly resistant.

Hemingray applied their carnival coating from bottom up on smaller insulators; this is why the tops are lighter and bottoms darker (Examples of this can be seen on CD 162s CD 154, etc). They did however also apply using other methods that create a darker carnival.

Hemingray bottles in carnival are done for decorative purposes. They did water bottles, utility bottles and beverage bottles. The bottles are either ice blue or 7-up green before the coating is applied.



A word on fake Carnival Hemingray Insulators

Over the years there have been several fake carnival Hemingray insulators made. The glass is real but the coating was applied after the fact by a third party. Some are easy to spot as they are styles Hemingray did not produce or outside the above mentioned 1932-1936 range. Two examples of all known units are fake are, CD 257 and CD 1049.

Since we know they did their carnivals from 1932-1936 (based on date codes on known real Hemingray specimens) there are only a couple configurations of mold markings that Hemingray carnivals can come in. No mold and date code (1932), just a “O” (1933), O-4 (1934), O-4.

(one dot, 1935) and O-4: (two dots, 1936). Any other configuration would be outside of this range. One general note about the 1933-1934 produced Hemingray insulators, they may or may not have a mold number on the back. Anything 1935 and on will consistently have mold number.

Being in this date code range dose NOT automatically mean the insulator is real. It’s just a good diagnostic tool to eliminate some.



If your insulator is with in the correct date range for Hemingray carnival, the next thing to look at is the consistency of the application. If it is on smaller lower voltage insulators such as a CD 162, 154 etc. then these would of been most likely been sprayed from the bottom up, giving the top a lighter coating and bottom a darker coating. Some insulators such as power insulators like the CD 252 and CD 281 have a thicker (darker) coating and may not have been sprayed in the above mentioned manner.

Non Hemingray Specific ID Techniques

Check for chips on the insulator. If there is carnival coating in the chip it is most likely applied after leaving the factory.

A spotty or blotchy pooling of color is also a sign of post factory application.

Check for cracks, sometimes when the insulator is reheated to apply the coating they will crack.

For more info. on fake carnival glass be sure to see <http://www.insulators.info/books/fake/section2.htm>



17 Known Insulator styles in Carnival

CD 118 - CD 122.4 - CD 137 - CD 142 - CD 142.4 - CD 154 - CD 162 - CD 164 - CD 168 - CD 214 - CD 230 - CD 230.1 - CD 232 - CD 252 - CD 281 - CD 295 - CD 1052

6 Hemingray made bottles in Carnival

Water Bottles: 1Pt and 1Qt wishing well design.

Utility Bottle: Universal home bottle
Beverage bottles: No embossing with just a dot bottom, Sun Punch, Hammers (7-Up color glass), Wolverine Bottling Works.



CD 230



CD 230.1



CD 118



CD 137



CD 142



CD 142.4



CD 154



CD 162



CD 164



CD 168



CD 232



CD 252



CD 281



CD 1052



Nine CD 230s Carnival Hemingray D-512 in use

Photo Credit:

Shaun Kotlarsky: Sun Punch Bottle (Center Bottle), Universal Home Bottle (Bottom Bottle), CD 154, CD 168, CD 230, CD 230.1, CD 232, CD 254, CD281, CD 1052

Christian Willis: CD 118, CD 142, 142.4

Bill Meier: CD 137, CD 164

Matthew Willett: CD 162

Rodger Lucas: Pint Water bottle

Bob Stahr: Wolverine Bottling Works bottle (Top bottle)

Kevin Jacobson: CD 230s in use

Sources:

Wikipedia > Carnival Glass > http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnival_glass

Bob Stahr > Bottle Info. (Crown Jewels of the Wire, September 2001, page 11) > <http://goo.gl/ApYKcL>

Christian Willis > Hemingray Mold Date Codes > <http://www.hemingray.info/database/mold-datecodes.html>